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THE NORWEGIAN NOBEL COMMITTEE

DEN NORSKE NOBELKOMITE
The Norwegian Nobel Committee

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR 1996

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 1996, in two equal parts, to Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo and José Ramos-Horta for their work towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor.

In 1975 Indonesia took control of East Timor and began systematically oppressing the people. In the years that followed it has been estimated that one-third of the population of East Timor lost their lives due to starvation, epidemics, war and terror.

Carlos Belo, bishop of East Timor, has been the foremost representative of the people of East Timor. At the risk of his own life, he has tried to protect his people from infringements by those in power. In his efforts to create a just settlement based on his people's right to self-determination, he has been a constant spokesman for non-violence and dialogue with the Indonesian authorities. Ramos-Horta has been the leading international spokesman for East Timor's cause since 1975. Recently he has made a significant contribution through the "*reconciliation talks*" and by working out a peace plan for the region.

In awarding this year's Nobel Peace Prize to Belo and Ramos-Horta, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wants to honour their sustained and self-sacrificing contributions for a small but oppressed people. The Nobel Committee hopes that this award will spur efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict in East Timor based on the people's right to self-determination.

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